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PREVENTION OF CRIME

Prison officers and others who come in contact with the convict must, in the ideal state, take advantage of means for estimating his responsibility and daily increase in its efficient exercise. The prisoner must be made to understand that in his fitness for responsibility is his hope for release. He must learn in school and shop to speak and write and do the work of a skilled mechanic. Let him deposit his savings in the prison treasury or send them to his friends. Let him show evidence that he has, as far as possible, made restitution for the wrong that brought him to prison. When he has done these things and when the officers who have him in charge are aware of other less tangible indications of change in his character, such as an improved mental attitude toward society, we have evidence that the correctional institution is accomplishing its educational function, and in so doing is making it harder for the convict to return to prison after release.

The Leavenworth, Kansas, *Times* several months ago commented editorially, as follows: upon Abe Ruef's plan for giving prisoners a chance:

"Ruef's plan is an extension of an idea that has been in process of development for some years in various parts of the country. Prisoners' aid societies have been organized with a large measure of success, but they have failed quite to meet the need of the case in some respects. The Ruef idea is to make the prisoner a partner of his own redemption, to endow him with a direct share in the enterprise by starting the work inside the prison, and by giving him thus a measure of assurance before he goes that he will have a chance 'outside.' He wants to overcome the despondency and despair that many prisoners feel as they face the future. This is constructive work, and it is to be hoped that the California prison board will recognize its value and start the process in motion. Abe Ruef will have in large measure paid off his debts to society if he can establish some such process of preventing the penal institutions of the country from becoming breeding grounds for future crime."

A. L. GRANT, St. Paul.

Prevention of Crime vs. Coddling the Criminal.—The following is the body of a letter recently addressed to the Secretary of the Institute. Mr. Hillyer's vision penetrates to the roots of criminality. Criminologists everywhere must have it upon their consciences to emphasize prevention of crime first of all. [Eds.]

"I can not escape the conviction that too much attention is paid to coddling and taking care of criminals instead of the prevention of crime. If the law were enforced there would not be half, nay, there would not be one-tenth of the crime and consequent suffering that follows crime, by which our land is now being cursed from one end of the United States to the other.

"All this fancy notion that any criminal, especially a bad criminal who has done something particularly cruel and atrocious should be boarded as if at the Palmer House, and not required to do a lick of work, and have a pension to spend in bar rooms or gambling houses, where he will all the time be under the temptation to commit other crimes and tempt more criminals to follow his evil example, is wrong.

"If the yellow fever were raging at Rio Janeiro and five thousand cases occurred every day, the world would in the light of modern intelligence look on aghast if the health authorities of that city should devote their entire attention to care for the sick and burying the dead, but do not one solitary thing to

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kill the mosquitoes or clean up the city. If the latter course were pursued and had been rightly pursued early in the year, there would not have been any yellow fever and nobody would be sick and dying from it. And just so, if the law were enforced, there would be such an enormous diminution in crime as to greatly simplify the problem and make it far easier to be good and kind and humane and merciful to the few victims that old Satan has left.

"Those of us who have what I claim are the rational views on the subject of criminology are beginning to feel great congratulation in the fact that the courts are doing away with technicalities and as far as the law will allow avoiding delays. I think in my own state that whereas ten or twelve years ago from 40 to 60 per cent of criminal cases were reversed in the Appellate Courts, now reversals hardly amount to 10 per cent. The world is learning that the honest verdict of an honest jury ought to be allowed to stand.

"If the progress of enlightenment and knowledge of these great questions could only be made to reach properly the legislatures of the different states, we could do away with the thralldom now placed on the judges. The object of a criminal trial would then always and everywhere be the ascertainment of truth, the protection of the innocent, the punishment of the guilty, and for no other objects but these. The percentage of crime would then rapidly and immediately diminish.

"These results are directly within reach of the great and good men who compose our Institute, if they could only be reinforced by the great mass of the good men who are giving attention to these subjects, but who with absolutely amazing blindness and blundering, fritter away their time on jail reforms instead of criminal reform. Mind, I do not object to jail reform. No man living is more earnest in kindness and sympathy to the poor deluded criminal than is the writer; but what I want in this particular instance and in this emphatic way is to urge that it is far more inviting for the accomplishment of real and substantial good to prevent the individuals from becoming criminals and to preserve his innocence for presentation at the judgment day than it is to give him a few ounces more of meat and bread, or a new blanket, after he has declared war on society and violated the laws of God and man.

GEORGE HILLYER, Atlanta, Ga.

Migrations of Thieves.—In the winter season pocket picking is practically at a standstill in the northern states. This is because it is the overcoat season, and the pockets of citizens are protected by the long coats, and the difficulty of getting at them deters a thief from taking any chances because under the conditions it would mean certain detection. Thieves go south in the winter time and attend the "Mardi Gras" festivities at New Orleans, and also visit the Gulf States and enjoy the festivals and do a little of their own work "on the side." Those who stay in the northern states have "their women" out hustling for them, "shoplifting" by day, and the "cold hands" game by night. In this way a thief can take things easy in the winter time especially if he has had a fairly successful "summer" season. Of course if his woman companion should "fall" it would take only a short time for his savings to be melted away in legal expenses. The western thieves come east in the summer time, and south in the winter; New York "guns" run over to New England States